United Nations

Daily Highlights

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MONDAY HIGHLIGHTS

- Secretary-General expresses hope for continued cooperation and support from Iran, Germany and Israel, among others, for release of remaining detainees and hostages.

- Secretary-General to hear report from his Personal Envoy to Yugoslavia, Cyrus Vance, who has returned to New York.

- Social Committee hears call for coordinated national and international response to "multifaceted" crime problems by Director-General of United Nations Office at Vienna.

- General Assembly adopts 38 resolutions and three decisions on issues of disarmament, international security and question of Antarctica.

- Human Rights Day, to be observed tomorrow, 10 December, will focus on twenty-fifth anniversary of International Covenants on Human Rights.

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Secretary-General Javier Pérez de Cuéllar said today that he had been in touch, during the last few days, with some of the Governments and others who can further assist him in his efforts to maintain the momentum for the release of the remaining detainees and hostages.

In a statement through his Spokesman, Mr. Pérez de Cuéllar said that he had maintained contacts with Iran, Germany and Israel, among others, in an effort to solve the remaining humanitarian problems. He expressed hope that the cooperation and support he had received until now would continue in the next few weeks to facilitate the release of the Lebanese detained without due process of law, the restitution of the remains of Israelis who died in Lebanon and the establishment of the fate of the missing Israeli. He said he had been approached by several Governments and individuals to ascertain the whereabouts of others who have disappeared in Lebanon over the years and would do his best to put an end to the suffering of families who live in uncertainty about the fate of their loved ones.

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The Secretary-General expressed his appreciation for the cooperation he had received from the Lebanese groups in making possible the results achieved so far. He also thanked the Government of Israel for having facilitated the release of so many Lebanese until now. These results, the Secretary-General said, would not have been possible without the continuous assistance of the Governments of Iran, Syria and Lebanon.

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Secretary-General Javier Pérez de Cuéllar commented this morning on the situation in Yugoslavia and on reports of a "local cease-fire" in Dubrovnik, saying it was holding "more or less". He told correspondents that it was not what he would call "a total cease-fire" which, he said, was indispensable for the deployment of a United Nations peace-keeping operation to that country.

The Secretary-General said he was expecting to hear a report tomorrow by his Personal Envoy, Cyrus Vance, who had returned to New York today.

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Crime and criminal justice must be addressed as multifaceted problems requiring coordinated national and international responses, said Margaret Anstee, Director-General of the United Nations Office at Vienna and Head of the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs, as the debate on questions of crime prevention and criminal justice began today in the General Assembly's Third Committee (Social, Humanitarian and Cultural).

In an opening statement to the Committee, Ms. Anstee said humane and efficient criminal justice would permit equity, constructive social change and social justice, protecting basic values and the inalienable rights of peoples. One of the most important recommendations from the recent Versailles Ministerial Summit on crime prevention, she said, was the establishment of a new Commission to address the issue. Describing the proposed new programme of the Commission, she said its tasks would not only include providing assistance to member States in combating national and transnational crime, but also considering the desirability of an international convention on crime prevention and criminal justice.

Robert Van Schaik, the representative of the Netherlands, spoke on behalf of the European Community, pointing out that while underdevelopment and its lack of social opportunities might be said to generate lawlessness and crime, development appeared to create new opportunities for new forms of crime, including acts causing pollution of the natural environment.

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While noting South Africa's accession to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the General Assembly has stressed the need for South Africa to fully disclose its nuclear installations and

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materials. It also called upon South Africa to comply fully with the safeguards agreement it had concluded with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

That resolution was one of 38 resolutions and 3 decisions adopted on Friday on issues related to disarmament, international security and the question of Antarctica.

By a resolution on Antarctica, the Assembly welcomed the recent signing in Madrid of the Protocol to the Antarctic Treaty which deals with environmental protection. It expressed disappointment, however, that the Protocol was not negotiated with the full participation of the international community. It also expressed concern that steps had not been taken to permanently ban prospecting and mining in Antarctica.

Among other decisions, the Assembly deplored Israel's refusal to renounce possession of nuclear weapons and expressed concern at cooperation between Israel and South Africa.

On the issue of nuclear disarmament, the Assembly asked the Conference on Disarmament to continue to consider the question of prohibiting the production of fissionable material for nuclear weapons and other nuclear explosive devices.

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The United Nations is observing tomorrow, 10 December, Human Rights Day. This year, the Day will not only mark the anniversary of the 1948 adoption by the United Nations of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, but will also commemorate the twenty-fifth anniversary of the adoption of the International Covenants on Human Rights.

The landmark Universal Declaration of Human Rights proclaimed that "all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights". The principles of the Declaration were transformed into legally binding norms through the two Covenants and the First Optional Protocol, adopted by the General Assembly in 1966. The Second Optional Protocol, which obliges each State party to take all necessary measures to abolish the death penalty, was adopted in 1989.

Both Covenants proclaim the right of all peoples to self-determination, and guarantee the rights they proclaim without discrimination of any kind as to race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.

Activities at Headquarters will include the Human Rights Day Programme, organized by the Committee on Security and Independence of the International Civil Service, United Nations Staff Union; and the opening of the exhibition "Auschwitz: A Crime Against Humanity", General Assembly Public Lobby Exhibits Gallery to run through 31 January 1992.

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